

Office of Central Inspection Construction and Remodeling Plan Review, Permitting and Inspection

Construction Permitting Overview

Applications for construction permits on private parcels of land (and not located in public street, sidewalk or utility right-of-way) are obtained through the Office of Central Inspection (OCI). Permit application processes are divided into two categories: (1) one and two-family construction/remodeling; and (2) multi-family, office, commercial and industrial construction/remodeling (hereinafter referred to as “commercial” construction/remodeling). The application review and permit issuance processes for these categories of construction are significantly different in terms of required application detail and the time required to complete application review/approval.

Building, electrical, mechanical, plumbing, and/or sewer construction permits, or structure demolition and/or interior demolition permits, are required for the following:

- certain site development activity such as excavation, grading, or placement of fill
- constructing, enlarging, altering, remodeling or demolishing a structure or space; this includes new structures, additions, most decks, masonry fences, swimming pools, etc.
- changing the building code use/occupancy classification of a building or space regardless of the level of construction changes
- installing or replacing any building wiring or equipment such as branch electrical circuits, electrical panels, water heaters, furnaces, air conditioners, water or gas piping, water or sewage drain lines, water and sewer service lines, etc.
- installing or altering any fire suppression, detection or fire alarm systems
- installing or substantially altering elevators, lifts or escalators

In addition to the above, a Flood Plain Development Permit/Application is required for any excavation, fill or building development located in a federal or locally designated flood plain or flood way. Federal flood plain maps are available in the Office of Central Inspection, and in the Stormwater Management Office of Public Works (located on the 8th floor of City Hall), 316-268-4498. See OCI “Flood Plain Development Permit/Application” and “Flood Plain Elevation Certificate/Flood Plain Development Information” forms/information in Appendix B.

Permit Exceptions:

Construction permits are not required for routine maintenance such as painting, carpeting, wallpapering, installing cabinets and shelving, replacing plumbing fixtures (faucets, handles, etc.), replacing lighting fixtures or damaged electrical outlets, etc. Other specific exceptions include:

- installing storm windows and doors
- replacing windows or doors where the size or location of the window or door opening is not changed
- installing new or replacement driveways and sidewalks on private property
- constructing or replacing a wire, wrought iron or wood fence eight feet high or less
- repairing or replacing roof shingles or siding that is less than 400 square feet in total area
- replacing sheetrock, plaster or other similar wall or ceiling covering when the area replaced does not exceed 100 square feet
- constructing, replacing or repairing uncovered patios
- constructing, replacing or repairing uncovered exterior decks, porches or stoops not more than 30 inches above grade and not built over a basement or another story/floor level

Who Can Obtain a Permit:

Generally, a contractor who is tested, licensed and insured by the City of Wichita to perform the relevant construction work must obtain permits. Details of the City's contractor licensing are outlined in greater detail below.

Homeowner-occupants of single-family dwellings are allowed to obtain their own permits and perform construction work on their residence. Such residential building permits may cover all facets of a project, including structural, building, plumbing, electric and mechanical work. However, before performing any plumbing, electrical or mechanical work, the homeowner-occupant must pass a simple code examination and submit a basic plan for the proposed installation.

Suspension of Permit Application or Permit:

Construction permit applications or permits may be suspended if no response to a review has been made, no activity has been recorded, or substantial progress has not been made for 180 days. Once a permit is suspended, the permit must be renewed or a new permit may have to be obtained.